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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 000685

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [MX](#)  
SUBJECT: CODEL ENGEL DISCUSS SECURITY ISSUES WITH MEDINA  
MORA

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Charles V. Barclay. Reason:  
1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (U) Summary. On February 16, Attorney General (AG) Eduardo Medina Mora received U.S. Representative Eliot Engel and members of the House Foreign Affairs Western Hemisphere Sub-committee. The AG was accompanied by Attorney General's Office (PGR) Special Advisor Oscar Rocha, Deputy Attorney General for Legal and International Affairs Juan Miguel Alcantra, AG Advisor Jose Octavio Tripp, and other PGR officials. The AG and the CODEL discussed security challenges facing both the U.S. and Mexico including the GOM's efforts to combat narco-trafficking in cooperation with the U.S., the need for the U.S. to do more on arms trafficking, crimes committed against U.S. citizens, and efforts to implement justice reform. End Summary.

#### U.S.-Mexico Law Enforcement Cooperation

¶2. (SBU) Medina Mora observed that the current USG-GOM law enforcement relationship was at its best ever and was producing results. He outlined GOM/PGR initiatives and successes, such as the ban on imports of methamphetamine precursor chemicals and other record-setting seizures. These measures, along with joint US-Mexico efforts, have reduced the ability of the cartels to move drugs into the U.S. As testimony to better enforcement on both sides of the border, he noted that cocaine prices in the U.S. are up and that purity is down. He cautioned that if drug demand in the U.S. is inelastic, the flow would continue. That said, he argued that the U.S. should support more demand reduction programs domestically.

#### Narco-Violence

¶3. (SBU) The AG surmised that GOM pressure on traffickers had resulted in a violent turf war among the cartels, as well as the evolution of other forms of criminal activity such as kidnapping and extortion. Of the more than 6000 narco-related intentional homicides in 2008, 90 percent were among cartel members or in confrontation with federal forces. That said, Mexico's violent homicide rate -- roughly 10 per 100,000 inhabitants -- remains low compared with other Latin American countries. In 2008, the rates for Colombia and Brazil were 33 and 40, respectively. Historically, Mexico's violent homicide rate has actually decreased from 18 since the early 90s, when many of the violent homicides were due to communal disputes in Chiapas and Oaxaca. Medina Mora recognized that the current type of violence is more

worrisome as an institutional threat and that more cooperation and intelligence sharing with the USG was necessary to confront it.

#### Arms Trafficking

14. (C) The AG said that the other relevant component to the security situation is the flow of cash and arms from the U.S. into Mexico. Over 90% of the weapons seized in Mexico come from the U.S. Since the beginning of Calderon's Administration (December 2006), over 33,000 weapons have been seized; 18,000 of which are assault rifles, AK-47, R-15s. The AG said that this was -- in both relative and absolute numbers -- more than double after the U.S. ban on assault rifles was lifted. He argued that the U.S. amendment on arms possession was never meant to arm criminal groups, and that much more needed to be done to stem the flow. Representative Engel agreed with the AG on the issue of arms trafficking and said that he had presented President Obama with a letter on February 12, calling on him to enforce the ban on assault rifles.

15. (SBU) The AG added that 70 percent of total sales of weapons in the U.S. -- that later ended up in Mexico -- are sold to legitimate buyers who sell their identities at about \$50 a piece. He complained that this practice was illegal, yet happens without consequence. He insisted that more be done to stop this activity.

#### Judicial Reform

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16. (SBU) Representative Engle praised the GOM's comprehensive justice system reforms and asked if there were funds needed under the Merida Initiative to assist in their implementation. The AG acknowledged that justice reform in Mexico represented a big challenge that would necessitate more resources, but that many states were already moving in that direction.

#### Brad Will

17. (C) Representative Engle asked about the status of the Brad Will case. The AG explained that the Expert Forensic Office of PGR determined that bullet that killed Amcit Brad Will was a short distance shot. They have apprehended a suspect who is being prosecuted. PGR produced a report on the incident which has been shared with Mexican Ambassador Sharukan that addresses many of the points raised by human rights organizations. Unfortunately, the conclusion drawn from the report is not very popular with groups close to Brad Will in Oaxaca. The analysis is the product of careful forensic investigation and the family will have access to the report.

#### Border Security

18. (C) Representative Salazar asked if the GOM would have sufficient revenue to invest in border security measures next year, given the economic crisis and the outlook for oil revenue and the futures market. The AG politely acknowledged that Mexico's terrorism strategy was not designed to "please the U.S." That said, he noted that not a single terrorist had entered the U.S. to date from Mexico, and it was in the GOM's interest to ensure one never does so as to avoid an "irrational reaction" by the U.S. He said that while 2009's budget was covered, 2010 would be challenging. Nevertheless, he assured the U.S. delegation that there were certain priority areas of spending that could not be cut.

#### Missing Americans

9.(C) Rep. Cuellar raised the issue of missing Americans in Mexico and encouraged the GOM to continue working with the

FBI on these cases, as closure was needed for their families in the United States. The AG assured continued cooperation with the FBI in solving these cases. He noted that crime levels in Nuevo Laredo were much lower, but that this was not necessarily a "good sign," as it could imply that one of the cartels had taken control of the area.

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